(c) whether it is a fact that right to import wheat has been awarded to the public sector agencies; and

(d) if so, the reasons for not allowing the creation of competition in the field of importing wheat in the country by inviting private sector also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The State Trading Corporation (STC) has been permitted to import 5 lakh tonnes of wheat. The reasons are rationale behind importing the wheat, *inter alia*, are reduced availability of wheat stocks in the Central Pool, high ruling market prices, higher offtake, lower procurement levels and to augment the domestic availability of wheat.

(c) Yes, Sir. The import will be done through STC.

(d) The STC is following a transparent commercial procedure for import of the wheat, by calling for open global tenders, which is open to the private sector to participate in.

**Offtake of wheat**

†597. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether 12 to 14 lakh tonnes of wheat is being lifted monthly from Food Corporation of India for public distribution system and for the various Goverment schemes;

(b) if not, the facts thereof and the details of wheat lifted during January, 2005 to December, 2005;

(c) whether it is a fact that approximately 66 lakh tonnes of wheat was in the godowns of Food Corporation of India as on 1st January, 2006; and

(d) if so, whether this quantity was sufficient till April, 2006?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Month-wise details of wheat lifted out of Central Pool during the period January, 2005 to December, 2005 are given below:-

(in lakh tonnes)

| Month | Offtake of Wheat | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | TPDS | Other Schemes | Total |
| January, 2005 | 12.42 | 3.92 | 16.34 |
| February, 2005 | 11.87 | 3.21 | 15.08 |
| March, 2005 | 11.79 | 6.41 | 18.20 |
| April, 2005 | 8.80 | 5.17 | 13.97 |
| May, 2005 | 10.19 | 3.46 | 13.65 |
| June, 2005 | 11.08 | 8.49 | 19.57 |
| July, 2005 | 11.48 | 3.87 | 15.35 |
| August, 2005 | 9.43 | 3.62 | 13.05 |
| September, 2005 | 10.40 | 3.09 | 13.49 |
| October, 2005 | 9.55 | 2.35 | 11.90 |
| November, 2005 | 8.94 | 3.09 | 12.03 |
| December, 2005 | 9.21 | 4.54 | 13.75 |

(c) A quantity of 61.88 lakh tonnes of wheat was available with FCI in Central Pool as on 01.01.2006.

(d) Yes, Sir.

**Procurement of foodgrains by private companies**

†398. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.